

The University of Chicago

THE
BEGINNINGS OF GHASSÂN

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
AUGUST, 1940

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF GHASSÂN

The history of the Ghassanids, according to the Arab historians, covers a long period,¹ but as will be shown, we have detailed evidence for the activities of only a few generations, spanning about a century. Most of our story will be concerned with events during the reigns of Ḥārith son of Gabala, Mundhir son of Ḥārith and Nu'mān son of Mundhir, but our first problem is to discover the earliest time when the Ghassanids are historically known, and their geographical and political relations. This entails the consideration of various Arab states which appear along the eastern frontier of the Roman empire in Palestine and Syria. The Nabataeans, Palmyra and other smaller states such as Edessa, however, will not be taken into consideration.

Actually our story begins, not with the Ghassanids, but with their bitter rivals of later times, the Lakhmids. The commonly accepted tradition is that the Lakhmids, like the Ghassanids were of South Arabian origin, and were the rulers of the kingdom whose capital was at Ḥīra, near the present Nejef, where they formed an Arab buffer state for the Sasanians at the same time that the Ghassanids performed that function for the Byzantines. For both these groups, however, we find a variant tradition that they were tribes of Ma'add, and thus of "North Arabian" rather than "South

¹Ḥamza, *Annales*, ed. I.M.E. Gottwaldt (Leipzig, 1844), I, 114-122, and following him, Abū l-Fidā', *Historia Anteislamica*, ed. H.O. Fleischer (Leipzig, 1831), pp. 128-130, give the longest period, with thirty-two and thirty-one kings respectively. Al-Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, ed. Barbier de Meynard (9 vols.; Paris: 1861-1878), III, 217 ff., gives a total of eleven, but names only seven actually as kings of Ghassân in al-Shâm; while al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, ed. M.T. Houtsma (Leyden, 1883), I, 234-236, names ten kings. Ibn Kutaiba, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1850), pp. 314 ff., mentions specifically as kings only four men, three of whom are named al-Ḥārith--a genealogy apparently determined to include the trinity named in a verse of al-Nābigha which is quoted by Ibn Kutaiba, p. 315, and by al-Mas'ūdī, III, 221, but not included in either edition of the *Diwān*, that of W. Ahlwardt (London, 1870), or of H. Derenbourg, in *Journal asiatique*, Sér. 6, Vol. XII (1868).

Arabian" origin.¹

The traditions regarding the early Lakhmid kings are both confirmed and weakened by inscriptional evidence which has been published since Rothstein's monograph. Three inscriptions now give historical reality to three of the earliest kings, whom all scholars had considered legendary, but on the other hand, in the case of two of them at least, the evidence shows that these early rulers were not at Ḥira but in the Ḥaurān, later the seat of the Ghassanids.

The first Lakhmid king according to all the lists is 'Amr ibn 'Adī, who is followed by his son Imru' l-Ḳais ibn 'Amr,² but according to one line of tradition there were before the Lakhmids arrived, two or three earlier kings of the Tanūkh, the confederation of tribes which was supposed to have settled between Ḥira and Anbār, west of the Euphrates.³ These kings are Mālik ibn Fahm, his brother 'Amr (omitted in some accounts), and Gadhīmat al-Ab-rash, whose relation to the first two is not certain.⁴

That Gadhīma did actually exist we now know from a bilingual Greek and Nabataean inscription from Umm ij-Jimāl, south-west of Jebel Druz. The two parts of the inscription were found in different locations at different times. Both versions state, "This is the stela of Fīhr, son of Shullay, the tutor of Gadhīmat, king of Tanūkh."⁵ Here we have startling confirmation of the Arab tradition of Gadhīma as king of the Tanūkh, but not that he was king in Ḥira. It is significant that the lists of kings of Ḥira

¹G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lakhmiden in al-Ḥira* (Berlin, 1899), p. 43. Since it is the general tendency of Muslim writers to attribute to all the important tribes a South Arabian beginning "in maiorem gloriam Iemenitarum," as Rothstein puts it (p. 39), the variant tradition which places them originally in a less favored portion of Arabia is almost certain to be earlier.

²Rothstein, pp. 50-60.

³Hishām ibn al-Kalbī, in al-Ṭabarī, *Annales*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al. (15 vols.; Leyden, 1879-1901), *II*, 822. Cf. Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leyden, 1879), pp. 226 ff.; Rothstein, pp. 18 ff.

⁴Rothstein, pp. 38 f.

⁵E. Littmann, *Semitic Inscriptions* ("Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909," Division IV, sec. A [Leyden, 1914]), pp. 37-40. For further bibliography see p. 38.

do not include Gadhîma, but begin with 'Amr ibn 'Adî,¹ and even Hishâm ibn al-Kalbî says that many of the Tanûkh moved from 'Irâk to Syria.² Therefore we should not be surprised at finding the tutor of Gadhîma buried at Umm ij-Jimâl in the Haurân region. The inscription is not dated, but on epigraphic and linguistic grounds it is assigned to about 250 A.D., which gives additional weight to the Arab tradition that Gadhîma was the adversary of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra.³

Confirmation for 'Amr ibn 'Adî is found unexpectedly in the great Paikuli inscription of the Sasanian king Narseh I (293-302). In the list of independent kings is found "amrû apgar(1)nan," 'Amru the descendant of the Abgars,⁴ the former ruling line of Roman vassal kings at Edessa. With our present evidence it cannot be proved that this Amru actually is the Lakhmid 'Amr ibn 'Adî, but it seems very probable, especially in view of the fact that the son of 'Amr is likewise known.

The successor of 'Amr is given by the Arabs as Imru'l-Kais son of 'Amr, whose tomb was found some years ago at an-Nemâra, east of the Haurân between Jebel Sês and the Ruḥba. The tomb inscription is famous as being "the earliest we have in true North Arabic," although it is written in Nabataean characters.⁵ Imru'l-Kais, who died December 7, 328, is described as king of all the Arabs, and entitled to wear the tâj or diadem. The tribes of Asad and

¹See above, p. 6.

²Al-Ṭabarî, I², 831; cf. Nöldeke, Perser und Araber, p. 23.

³Cf. Rothstein, p. 37.

⁴Paikuli inscription: Parsik 45, Pahlavik 42, in E. Herzfeld, Paikuli (2 vols.; Berlin, 1924), I, 118 f.; cf. glossary, pp. 136 f., 140 f. The form amrû agrees with the Arabic عمرو except for the substitution of alif for 'ain. On this point see Herzfeld, p. 136.

⁵The original publication is R. Dussaud, "Inscription nabatéo-arabe d'en-Nemâra," Revue archéologique, XLI (1902), 409 ff., 716 ff. See also Repertoire d'épigraphie sémitique, I (Paris, 1905), No. 483; Dussaud, Les Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam (Paris, 1907), pp. 34-37; and Repertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe, I (Cairo, 1931), 1 f., which includes full bibliography. For a copy of the actual inscription, see also N. Abbott, The Rise of the North Arabic Script and Its Kur'anic Development ("Oriental Institute Publications," L [Chicago, 1939], Pl. I, No. 2). The text with transliteration and translation, but without commentary is also given by J. Cantineau, Le Nabatéen, II (Paris, 1932), 49-50.

Nizâr and Ma'add, all "North Arabian,"¹ acknowledged his rule, and he maintained relations with Rome, and possibly with Persia as well.²

We are immediately struck by the fact that Imru'l-Ḳais like his predecessors is not called king of Ḥīra, but king of the Arabs, and that like Gadhīma he is associated with the general area of the Ḥaurān.³ Nothing is at present known of the immediate successors of Imru'l-Ḳais except the names in the lists, or how long they remained in the Ḥaurān, but nearly a century later we have definite proof that the Lakhmids were installed in Ḥīra, where the Sasanian prince Bahram Gôr (Bahram V, 420-438) had been sent as an infant to be reared at the court of Nu'mân I.⁴

On the basis of Muslim tradition, it is difficult if not impossible to describe the origins of the Ghassanids and their adventures in reaching the borders of Palestine and Syria, where they finally established themselves. It is questionable if we may rightfully speak of them as settling in Syria. Certainly they seemed to remain at least semi-nomadic, with no fixed capital, although they came to control some of the most fertile areas on the Syrian border, the Gaulān and the Ḥaurān. Still we have one or two clues as to their location before their arrival on the eastern limes of the Roman empire. First, the Ghassanids appear to be mentioned in two pre-Christian "Late Lihyanite" inscriptions from

¹According to the Arab genealogies, Nizâr is a son of Ma'add, and Asad a grandson of Nizâr, while all are descendants of Adnân. F. Wüstenfeld, Genealogische Tabellen der arabischen Stämme und Familien (Göttingen, 1852), Part II, Table A.

²The problems of epigraphy and syntax involved in two possible ways of reading the first part of l. 4 are at present insoluble. The question is whether Imru'l-Ḳais is making his sons representatives to Persia and to Rome, or organizing them as horse-men for Rome--indicating his vassalship to Rome. For the text and transliteration, see the various publications listed above. Syntactically the latter reading looks better, and is still given by Cantineau; epigraphically, as Dr. R. Bowman points out, the reading remains debatable.

³It is interesting to note that while Nöldeke considered Imru'l-Ḳais undoubtedly as the founder of the Lakhmid line, yet he too ranked him as a vassal of the Romans rather than the Sasanians. Th. Nöldeke, "Der Araberkönig von Namâra," in Florilegium Melchior de Vogüé (Paris, 1909), p. 466.

⁴Nöldeke, Perser und Araber, pp. 79-81; cf. Rothstein, pp. 62-63.

al-ʿUla.¹ The suggested identification of Ghassân with the ḡassān of Ariston would fit with this date and localization, for the ḡassān were a people whom the admiral of Ptolemy II found on the Red Sea coast of Arabia during his voyage of ca. 280 B.C., as reported by Agatharchides.² If we may accept the Lihyanite readings and the identification of the ḡassān, we have pre-Christian references to the tribe not in Yemen, but in the Ḥijāz.

By the time of the emperor Julian (361-363) it would seem that the Ghassanids have actually reached the Syrian frontier, for at that time we hear of a certain Malechus, Podosaces by name, phylarch of the Assanitic Saracens.³ If Assanitae is the equivalent of Ghassân, then we have here the earliest mention of the Ghassanids on the Syrian frontier, and the use of the tribal name, which is not found in later Byzantine or Syriac sources.⁴ This fits very

¹D. H. Müller, "Epigraphische Denkmäler," *Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse*, XXXVII (Vienna, 1889), 58 (No. 1), and 70 (No. 21), and Pls. III-V. Cf. A. Musil, *Kuṣejr ʿAmra* (Vienna, 1907), p. 130, n. 73. Müller No. 1 is also discussed by A. J. Jaussen and R. Savignac, *Mission archéologique en Arabie*, II (Paris, 1914), 394-395, and Pls. LXXXII and CV. Müller reads No. 1, l. 1, "Wā'il the Ghassanid," while JS read "the wakīl (agent) of the Ghassân," which would indicate that the Ghassân themselves were not at al-ʿUla. According to the photographs of the squeezes, JS seem to have the better reading, but on the other hand in Müller No. 21, l. 4, where the same combination is found, Wā'il looks like the better reading. On the basis of F. V. Winnett's division of Lihyanite inscriptions into early and late Lihyanite according to whether the *mīm* is closed or open at the bottom, both inscriptions belong to the late group with open *mīm*. See F. V. Winnett, "A Study of the Lihyanite and Thamudic Inscriptions," *University of Toronto Studies*, No. 3 (Toronto, 1937), pp. 9-11. Winnett (p. 51) dates the "Late Lihyanite" to the first half of the fourth century B.C., while G. Levi della Vida, article "Lihyân," *Encyclopaedia of Islâm*, III (Leyden, 1936), 26-27, dates the beginning of the independent Lihyanite kingdom from the end of the third century B. C., which Winnett for several reasons considers too late.

²Agatharchides, in Diodorus Siculus, III. 45, and in Photius, in *Geographi Graeci minores*, ed. K. Müller (2 vols. and atlas; Paris, 1882), I, 184, 186. W. W. Tarn discusses this point in his "Ptolemy II and Arabia," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, XV (1929), 17. According to Tarn, Ha-Ghassân of Müller No. 1 (JS No. 55) has nothing to do with the later Ghassân, but means the ḡassān of Ariston. This it does very plausibly, but contrary to Tarn, I think that Ha-Ghassân (ḡassān) and the later ḡassān both refer to the people whom we subsequently find on the Syrian frontier, whom the Arabic writers call Ghassân (الغساسنة).

³Ammianus Marcellinus xxiv. 2. 4.

⁴Musil, *Kuṣejr ʿAmra*, p. 130, was the first to suggest this

well with the hypothesis that not long after the death of Imru'ī-Kais ibn 'Amr the Lakhmids had left for Ḥīra, and the Ghassanids had taken their place.

The Arab tribes that impinged on the eastern frontier of the Roman empire could not fail to come in contact with Christianity, and during the fourth century the church begins to show the extension of its influence over the Arabs. The bishopric of Bostra is known from 325, when Nichomachus took part in the Council of Nicaea, together with the bishops from five other sees in the province of Arabia, and Petrus, bishop of Aila in Palestine.¹ These bishoprics, however, never formed a national church as in Egypt or Persia, but remained isolated, part of the provincial organization of the Byzantine church.²

In spite of the official church organization in the eastern provinces, as time went on the Arabs came more in contact with Christians of heretical sects who escaped to the desert's edge, and especially the Monophysites. Since the Monophysites would not agree to the edicts of the Council of Chalcedon in 451, or the later attempt at compromise, as embodied in Zeno's Henotikon (482), they were under the ban, and from time to time actively persecuted, which drove them, and especially the die-hard monkish element, out of reach of the government and orthodox church officials. What made the greatest impression on the Arabs was the uncompromising asceticism of these heretical monks, and their adoption of the solitary places and the desert for their home.³

equation, which seems very reasonable. A parallel example, in which ξ at the beginning of a word disappears in transliteration, and from about the same period, is Ἀριϋδελα for Gharandal. In the *Notitia dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin, 1876), xxxiv, 44, the form is *Arieldela*; in Hierocles, *Synecdemus*, ed. G. Parthey (Berlin, 1866), 721, it is Ἀριϋδελα ; and in Georgius Cyprius, *Descriptio Orbis Romani*, ed. H. Gelzer (Leipzig, 1890), p. 53, the form is Ἀριϋδελα . See also R. E. Brünnow and A. von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia* (3 vols.; Strassburg, 1904-1909), III, 262; E. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (3 vols.; Boston, 1841), II, 496; and Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, Vol. II, *Edom* (Vienna, 1907-1908), pp. 194-197.

¹H. Gelzer, *Patrum Nicaenorum Nomina* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 63-64; cf. *Prov. Arabia*, III, 334.

²L. Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church*, trans. Claude Jenkins, III (London, 1924), 396.

³*Ibid.*, p. 395.

Many of the Arab groups on the eastern frontier that we hear about during the fourth and fifth centuries became converted to Christianity, as we shall see, and even the Arab historians mention the Christianizing of the Arabs in Syria. Ibn Ḳutaiba says that the first Arab tribe to enter al-Shām or Syria, was Salḥ, of Ghassān, and, it is said, of Ḳudā'a, and they professed Christianity. Later when the Banū Gafna came to al-Shām, they remained there and became Christians.¹ According to Ya'qūbī, Ḳudā'a was the first of the Arab tribes to proceed to al-Shām; they became Christian and were made kings over whatever Arabs were in Syria.² In another passage Ya'qūbī says that when the Ghassān came to al-Shām there were already there a people of Salḥ who had entered into the protection of Rome and become Christians.³ Al-Mas'ūdī too says: "Ḳudā'a b. Mālik b. Ḥimyar were the first who settled al-Shām, and they were annexed to the kings of al-Rūm, who, after they entered into Christianity, made them kings over whatever Arabs got possession of al-Shām."⁴

We hear of the conversion of another group of Saracens at about the same time as Malechus Podosaces, the Assanite phylarch. Not long before the accession of Valens in A.D. 364, a whole tribe were converted and baptised with their chief, Zocomus--the result of intercourse with priests who dwelt among the Saracens, and monks who dwelt in neighboring deserts, distinguished for their purity and their miraculous gifts. Zocomus was grieved because he had no son, and a famous monk, whom he consulted, promised that if he believed in Christ, his desire would be granted. A son was born, and Zocomus and his whole tribe were baptised, and thereafter they were peculiarly fortunate, strong and formidable to the Persians and other Arabs.⁵

Another Christian Arab ally of the Romans was the widowed queen Mavia, who appeared toward the end of the fourth century.

¹Kitāb al-Ma'ārif, p. 313.

²Ta'rifkh, I, 234.

³Ibid., p. 233.

⁴Les prairies d'or, III, 215.

⁵Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi. 38. Th. Nöldeke, "Die ghassanidischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's," *Abhandlungen der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, philologische und historische Klasse* (Berlin, 1887), p. 3, discusses the identification of the name Zocomus with the Ḍagā'ima, first suggested by A. von Gutschmid. The Ḍagā'ima were a branch of Salḥ, according to Abū'l-Fidā', p. 128. See also Ibn Duraid, *Kitāb al-Ishtikāk*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1854), p. 319.

Her tribe, while led by her late husband, had been in alliance with Rome, but after the emperor Valens (364-378) departed from Antioch shortly before his death, they revolted, and under her leadership ravaged all the regions of the East, the frontiers of the provinces of Arabia and Palestine. The war was pursued with such vigor that the Romans sent an ambassador to the Arab queen to ask for peace. Now there was at that time a certain monk in the desert, Moses by name, who was of Saracen origin, and noted for his piety, faith and miracles. Mavia agreed to terminate the war on condition that Moses should be made bishop over her people. With difficulty Moses was seized and taken to Alexandria for ordination at the hands of the bishop Lucius; this Moses refused, for Lucius was an Arian, and exiled Catholic bishops had to be found to consecrate him. The ordination ended the war, for Mavia kept her word scrupulously, while Moses went to exercise the functions of his office among the Saracens, and converted many of them. It is even said that Moses himself concluded the peace.¹

In the fifth century we know of several Arab princes who were set up as phylarchs by the Romans. The first of these, originally from 'Irāk, who is known to us only by the Persian title Aspebet, fled to Roman territory in 420, and received from the Prefect of the East, Anatolius, the position of phylarch over the Saracens of the Roman province of Arabia.² His authority, however,

¹Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, xi. 2; Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, iv. 36; Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist.*, vi. 38; Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica*, xxiii. Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, I (Leipzig, 1883), 64 has the same story with new touches, such as the fact that Mavia was supposed to be a Roman by birth. The story is also found in Michael Syrus, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot (4 vols.; Paris, 1899-1910), I, 294; and in Barhebraeus, *Chronography*, trans. E.A. Wallis Budge (London, 1932), I, 63.

²Our source is the life of St. Euthymius, 377-473, written by Cyril of Scythopolis about the middle of the sixth century, based on anecdotes collected from elderly monks who had known Euthymius, and from the great-grandson of Aspebet, Terebon the younger. The Life of Euthymius has been preserved in two recensions, one of which was published by J. B. Cotellier in *Ecclesiae Graecae Monumenta*, Vol. IV (Paris, 1692), unavailable in the University of Chicago libraries; and the other, longer known, but inferior, which formed part of the hagiographical collection of Simeon Metaphrastus (fl. 914), and has been published in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca Posterior*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1903), CXIV, 597-734, and in *Acta Sanctorum*, January, Vol. II (new ed., Paris, 1863-19--), II, 662-692. The material for the present discussion, however, is based on R. Génier, *Vie de Saint Euthyme*

seems to have been confined to parts of Palestine, for after the baptism of the Aspebet, his son Terebon, whose ailment was miraculously cured, and all his followers at the hands of St. Euthymius at his monastery, about ten miles east of Jerusalem, and a little south of the road to Jericho,¹ many Arabs came to be baptised, and they set up camps (parembolae) near the two monasteries of Euthymius and Theoctistus.² About 427 the Aspebet was made bishop of this Christian community of the Parembola, or Parembolae, under the name of Peter. In 431 he attended the Council of Ephesus.³ His son Terebon apparently became phylarch immediately; he was still phylarch about 458, when he was rescued from prison in Bostra by Euthymius. Having gone there on business, he fell into the trap of a co-phylarch, and was imprisoned by the governor of the city. When Euthymius heard of it, he wrote and asked Antipater, the bishop of Bostra, to release Terebon, which he did, and sent him back to Palestine with an escort.⁴

In 473, the seventeenth year of Leo (457-474), we hear of another Arab leader who deserted the Persian cause and came to Roman territory, Amorkesos, i.e., Imru'l-Kais, of the tribe of Nocalius.⁵ He began raiding, not the Romans, but the nearest Arabs, and as his successes increased, he added to his power and territory, and finally succeeded in possessing himself of the island of Iotabe at the mouth of the Gulf of Akaba, which had been a profitable customs port for the Romans.⁶ Desiring the benefits of being under

le Grand (Paris, 1909). For the statement above, Cotelier, IV, Euthym. Vita, p. 20, cited in Génier, p. 100.

For Anatolius, see O. Seeck, "Anatolius (9)," Paulys Real-Encyclopädia, ed. G. Wissowa, Vol. II (Stuttgart, 1894), cols. 2072-2073.

¹Génier, pp. 77-80.

²Ibid., p. 103.

³Cf. ibid., Ph. Labbe, Sacrosancta Concilia (Paris, 1671), Vol. III, col. 692.

⁴Cotelier, IV, 72, from Génier, p. 260. We are not told whether the co-phylarch held sway in Palestine or Arabia, but this is evidence for the fact that the Romans had set up more than one phylarch to help keep the frontier in order, even though a Roman governor held the capital of the province of Arabia. It is evident, too, that the phylarchs had authority within the provinces, not just along the actual frontier.

⁵Malchus, "Byzantiaka," in Excerpta de legationibus, ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1903), Part II, pp. 568-569, and in FHC, ed. K. Müller (Paris, 1868), IV, 112-113, for the material of this paragraph.

⁶Procopius, History of the Wars, I. xix. 3-4. F. M. Abel,

treaty to the Roman government, Amorkesos sent as ambassador to the court of Leo the bishop of his tribe, Peter--another bit of evidence for the wide extension of Christianity among the Arab tribes. Leo apparently was much impressed, and sent immediately for Amorkesos to come to Constantinople, where he treated him with every honor, and made him phylarch and patrician, ranking ahead of all the patricians of the court. Malchus considers the whole move most ill-advised, for he points out that not only was the Arab chief able to see the rich and unguarded eastern cities of the empire, which might be a temptation to him, but also he lost any awe he would have had of the Roman power if he had been kept firmly at a distance. Finally Leo gave the phylarch a beautiful jeweled gold ikon, and dismissed him, confirming him in the hold on Iotabe, giving him other villages as well, and making him ruler over whatever tribes he wished. This does not tell us where Amorkesos ruled, but it is likely that the tribes around the Gulf of 'Aqaba were under his control, and perhaps also in the provinces of Palestina III and Arabia.

But the lucrative revenues of the customs post of Iotabe were not long allowed to remain out of Roman hands, for in 497 Romanus, the commander in Palestine, by hard fighting won back the island, and again granted to Roman citizens there local autonomy and freedom to carry on trade, provided they paid the appointed tax into the treasury.¹

About the same time Romanus conquered Ogarus, the son of Arethas, known as the son of Thalabanes, that is, the Kindite Ḥuḡr ibn al-Ḥārith, and took many prisoners, after previously contending with and driving out of Palestine another Scenite or tented Arab, Gabalas.² Since the time and place fit in well, we may indubitably see in Gabalas the Gabala of the Arabic and Syriac writers, the father of the Arethas or Ḥārith who was made king by Justinian some thirty years later.³ Presumably Gabalas was not a phylarch under treaty to the Romans.

In the eleventh year of Anastasius, 501-502, a brother of Ogarus, Badicharimus or Ma^cdfkarib, made a whirlwind raid into

"L'ile de Iotabe," Revue biblique, XLVII (1938), 510-538.

¹Theoph., I, 141.

²Ibid. Cf. Olinder, p. 51.

³Procop. I. xvii. 47. Cf. Nöldeke, Ghas. Fürsten, p. 10.

Palestine, Syria and Phoenicia, but returned so quickly that the forces of Romanus could not overtake him.¹ The following year Anastasius made a treaty with Arethas, the father of Ogarus and Badicharimus, and all of Palestine and Syria and Arabia were at peace.² Almost immediately, in 503, the Tha^clabite Arabs were helping the Romans in the war with the Persians, which had broken out the year before, and they captured a caravan on its way to Ĥirtá de Na^cmán, that is, Ĥira. They did not stay at Ĥirtá, however, because the inhabitants had withdrawn into the inner desert.³

In 504 we find another phylarch, Asuades or Aswad by name, engaged in helping Areobindus and Romanus in a campaign at the time when Hypatius and Patricius were blockading Amida.⁴ If we can believe Ĥamza and Ya^ckūbf, the first of the Ghassanids to become a vassal of the Romans was Gafna, who is supposed to be the son of ^cAmr Muzaikīyá, the son of ^cĀmir.⁵ Gafna was made king over the Arabs of al-Shām by one of the kings of al-Rūm called ^{نسطورس}, Nastūras or Nestorius, that is, Anastasius, and so must have been established as vassal or ally some time between 491 and 518.⁶ The

¹Theoph. I, 143.

²Ibid., 144. This is evidently the peace mentioned by Nonnosus, "History," in Photius, "Bibliotheca," Cod. 111, FHG, IV, 179-180, and by Evagrius, Ecclesiastical History, iii. 36. Cf. also Nöldeke, Ghas. Fürsten, p. 10, and Olinder, p. 52.

³Joshua Stylites, Chronicle, ed. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), lxvii. As Olinder (p. 52) says, these Tha^clabites are much more likely to be the tribe of Arethas, called the son of Thala^cbams, than belonging to Ghassán, as Nöldeke, Ghas. Fürsten, p. 6 supposes on the basis of the name Tha^claba in the Arabic genealogies. It may be assumed that Jos. Styl. is referring to Ĥira, since the Syriac sources usually call Ĥira, Ĥirtá de Na^cmán. See below, p. 25, n. 4; p. 41, n. 3.

⁴Theoph. I, 146. For an account of these events in the Persian war, see George Rawlinson, The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy (London, 1876), pp. 352-360.

⁵Ĥamza, pp. 115-116; Ya^ckūbf, p. 235 inserts ^cAliyya between Gafna and ^cAmr, and Abū'l-Fidá', p. 128, puts in two extra generations. Mas^cūdī, III, 217, and Ibn Kūtaiba, p. 314, say that the first king of Ghassán to rule in al-Shām was called al-Ĥārith ibn ^cAmr. Nöldeke, Ghas. Fürsten, p. 9, considers the notice in Ĥamza all the more reliable because it does not fit in with his artificial system, and is confirmed by Ya^ckūbf, whose account does not otherwise agree with Ĥamza's.

⁶Ĥamza, p. 116. See Nöldeke, Ghas. Fürsten, p. 9, n. 4, for the form of the emperor's name, which he points out is easily

Syriac chronicles do not mention Gafna, nor the Byzantine writers.¹

Thus we find under Anastasius several phylarchs appointed to aid the Romans in fighting the Persians and their Arab allies, as well as to guard the desert frontier, but we have no exact knowledge of where their authority extended.

corrupted from the Syriac form ܐܦܢܐ. Ya^ckūbī, p. 235, says merely that the king of al-Rūm made Gafna king, but just above he mentions ܢܘܫܪ, Nūshr, as the king that permitted the Ghassān to settle in Syrian territory.

¹It seems improbable that he is the Gnouphas whom John Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. W. Dindorf ("CSHB" [Bonn, 1831]), 434.13, mentions as one of the phylarchs and duces called out in 529 in pursuit of the Lakhmid Mundhir after he had slain the Kindite phylarch Ḥārith when the latter fled to the inner desert, following his quarrel with Diomedes, the dux of Palestine. Theoph. I, 179, gives an epitomized account of the same event, but does not give the names of the phylarchs.

